

*Testimony of Kim Beauregard,
CEO of InterCommunity Health Care*

RE: H.B. No. 6659 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2025 AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

In regards to

Department of Public Health, School Based Health Center Funding
Appropriations Health Subcommittee Public Hearing, February 28, 2023

Senator Osten, Representative Walker and esteemed members of the Appropriations Health Subcommittee, my name is Kim Beauregard, I am the CEO of Intercommunity Health Care. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the Department of Public Health budget and specifically the need to continue funding for school-based health centers.

InterCommunity currently operates 10 School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) within the East Hartford Public Schools (EHPS) and Manchester Public Schools, now serving over 2800 students. We provide the comprehensive School-Based Health Center model of behavioral health and primary care services.

Five of our ten existing locations receive funding on a yearly basis via our DPH contract. Four of our non-funded schools (Woodland, Synergy, Langford, and Sunset Ridge) were provided funding in the amount of \$604,000 as part of the Fiscal Year 2023 budget using ARPA funds, we are still awaiting the actual funds, however we have been notified just recently that we will receive those funds broken into installments through 2023 and 2024.

Additionally, due to the demand for our services, we are now operating a school-based health center in Manchester (Illing Middle School) which has received no funding. Our Manchester location along with our four other locations that are not receiving yearly contracted funds were put into place to fill a critical need within these communities.

Intercommunity has been fully operational at all three new sites(Illing, Woodland and Sunset Ridge) since school began in 2022 and has operated out of the seven other sites since 2017 with two of these sites (Langford and Synergy) never being funded until we received ARPA funding in the 2022 legislation.

We would urge the committee to ensure these funds continue into the next biennium and that in future fiscal years school-based health center funding is available before the start of the school year. The significant delays in payment mean we have had to use other operating dollars to pay our staff and run these critically important school-based health centers.



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Over the last year or two, we have seen increasing demand for our school-based health services. A SBHC clinician's caseload is generally between 30-40 students; however, multiple sites are seeing caseloads of up to 90 students with as many as 13 additional students on the waitlist at each site.

InterCommunity's School Based Health Center staff continue to work to meet the demands of the pandemic by offering covid testing, administering vaccinations and offering more behavioral health services both in person and via telemedicine to meet the increased need. IC's SBHCs continue to serve large number of uninsured/underinsured students and students of undocumented status. In 2021, 22% of SBHC clients were uninsured and 65% were insured through Medicaid.

The poverty rate in East Hartford is 15% but the rate for those under 18 years of age is higher at 20.4%. Therefore, InterCommunity does not collect co-pay to keep care accessible for families as SBHC care is frequently the only healthcare these students are receiving. With limited resources, IC has been able to establish a greater demand for SBHC services.

However, we need to continue state funding for school-based care this has prevented InterCommunity from expanding further into the East Hartford and Manchester district

InterCommunity is asking for state funding to continue these needed school-based health centers services! This funding will allow InterCommunity to increase staffing and carry out all activities necessary to meet the needs of additional students who would be served by this expansion. Also, this funding would allow InterCommunity to increase staffing at current sites to meet the increase in demand for mental health services and primary health care.

Thank you.

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